

DANIELS CANYON - WASATCH COUNTY

It was not long after the first settlers of 1859 started to develop the land near the creeks coming into Provo Valley from nearby canyons, that herdsmen sought for close-by range for their livestock. Others explored the canyons for timber stands with which to build homes in Provo Valley and Utah Valley; so, just as the Provo Canyon road was built, Daniels Canyon was opened for this same purpose.

A man whose surname was Daniels lived close to the creek and trapped along it to the head of the canyon and it was from him that the canyon derived its name. Through the canyon, which was very narrow, with high, rugged sides, ran a stream of crystal clear water in the spring and early summer, which dwindled away to a small brook in the fall. The canyon sides were covered with grass, shrubs, mahogany, scrub oak and maple, also service berries, elder berries and choke cherries, and on toward the 8,000 feet summit, quaking aspens, and different species of pine grew in abundance.

At intervals, starting from the mouth of the canyon, other canyons break away east and west from Daniels Canyon. These provided fine summer pasture for cattle and sheep herds. As one starts into the canyon, Noakes and Bromley Hollow comes in from the west onto the bench-ground west of the creek, which was tilled in pioneer days.

As you go into the canyon proper Boomer Canyon comes in from the west. Boomer Bench, a high flat country breaks off into the canyon here. The Dry Fork comes in from the east; Parker Hollow comes in from the West. Clegg Canyon, named for a Mr. Clegg who had a sawmill there, comes in from the east. Next, Cummings Hollow, from the west, named for a family who operated a sawmill in that vicinity. Station Hollow comes in from the west, so named because of a station located there where riders who carried mail to Vernal could rest and change horses.

Center Canyon comes in from the east and was the location of another sawmill. Between this canyon and Dead Horse Flat, Cory Hanks, who was so cruelly maimed in a giant-cap explosion, had a little store and there he lived with his mother. Next Turner Canyon comes in from the west where Turners owned a sawmill. Then Rowe Hollow, which supposedly got its name because Indians and white men had a skirmish there. Three Forks, one canyon from the east, two from the west comes in next. Here John Turner had another sawmill; then comes McQuire Canyon from the east where Patrick McQuire built a sawmill.

Near the head of the canyon are small hollows - Shingle Hollow where the Alexanders ran a sawmill and Noakes made shingles. Forman Hollow where the Formans had a sawmill and Charles E. Thacker a shingle mill at the forks of the hollow. Small streams coursed down all of these hollows and canyons, emptying into Daniels Creek.

Hyrum Oaks was one of the first settlers of Provo Valley and eventually took up ground at the mouth of Daniels Canyon, from where you can look out over the valley. Tom Brown, a relative, lived down in the creek bottoms where he could raise garden crops, sweet potatoes, and peanuts. Hyrum Oaks went through the canyon into Strawberry Valley to cut wild hay for his stock. In 1879, Hyrum, with the help of William Bethers, surveyed a canal at the north end of Strawberry Valley with a spirit-level and plumb-bob to bring water over into Daniels Canyon by way of McQuire. He also operated a sawmill. Joe Jacobs lived just above the homes of Oaks, and Jim Ivie near the present site of the Strawberry headgate.

Ben Bromley and his family lived on the flat at the mouth of Bromley Hollow in a long two-roomed dirt-roofed cabin. Eli Gordon lived farther up the creek, then came Swen Bjorkman's; above them Ab Shelton, and Bob and Liza Winterton Giles had built their homes. John Winterton lived on Indian Flat which he fenced with brush, made a road against the hill, and farmed for two years before he left the valley.

The "Wasatch Wave" of August 14, 1896 states: "The corps of the Rio Grande Western surveyors who have been running a line through Daniels Canyon for the past month, commencing at the summit this side of Strawberry Valley, are down to the mouth of the canyon and will soon have the works completed to Heber. As has been previously stated in these columns, the main line of the new railroad will run through Daniels Canyon and tap the reservation country and Colorado points, thus making Heber the central point in this valley and from where a branch line will be run over to Park City." The rail line did not materialize.

On March 24, 1899 the Wasatch Wave contained an article stating the William Bethers and others had found a good vein of elaterite just east of the Old Forman sawmill site in Daniels Canyon. It is now known as the Wax Mine, although not operating.

In 1905, when the Uintah Reservation was thrown open, Theodore Freeze took up a homestead at the head of Daniels Canyon. During a quarrel Don Herbert fatally shot Theodore. Herbert died before he was brought to trial. Theodore's youngest brother, Vic, got the place but became dissatisfied and gave it up. It now belongs to the Bethers family.

The road through Daniels Canyon during the early years was a narrow, twisting trail that crossed the stream by fording shallow places or hitting many bridges at just the right angle when coming down with long loads of timber. In the spring the mud would be almost hub deep; in the summer, deep dust, and in the winter, always the danger of snow slides.

Dave Thacker relates that many years ago a Mr. Lewis from Ogden and a Pack photography outfit were going to Vernal to do somework. They had a house ten feet wide built on wheels to use for living and working purposes. They hired Dave Thacker to haul the outfit out there by team. He could only go a short distance then stop to chop out willows in order to get through Daniels Canyon. Now this road is a fine oiled highway, part of highway 40. Cattle and sheep are trucked through to their summer ranges. At any time of the year the scenery is most beautiful and when one comes out onto the bench overlooking Heber Valley, the sight is awe inspiring, a magnificent green valley with the backdrop of the Wasatch Mountains. A fine recreational spot called Lodge-Pole Camp was constructed by the Forest Service near the head of the canyon many years ago and recently a park was made near Whiskey Springs at the lower end of the canyon, which is available to tourists and people of the valley. -

Julia A. Anderson, Ethel D. Johnson

Lake Creek Landmarks
1877 to date:

Physical: cyote hollow

Cedar Grove (behind & east of Jay McNaughton's ^{home})

Robert Broadhead Spring.

^{Lime Beds??}
Red ledges

Big Hill

Buffalo Trails & Rock Quarry

Cedar Hill (Lindsay's Hill)